

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 22 are pending in the application. Claim 1 is an independent claim with claims 2 through 19 depending therefrom. Claim 20 is an independent claim with claims 21 and 22 depending therefrom.

Claims 1 through 3, 13, 16, and 20 stand rejected under § 102(b) in view of Rooklyn '087, as set forth in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Office Action.

Claims 4 through 12, 14, 15, 17 through 19, 21, and 22 have been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form, as set forth in paragraph 4 of the Office Action.

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims rejected in view of Rooklyn '087 patentably distinguish over the cited reference and are allowable. Thus, all pending claims are allowable and the application is in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 calls for an electro-mechanical feed mechanism disposed in the housing to dispense sheets of towel material from the dispenser. The feed mechanism comprises a first mechanical operational state wherein a sheet of the towel material is manually dispensed by a user grasping and pulling on a tail of the towel sheet extending from the dispensing slot. For example, referring to Fig. 1, in the first mechanical mode of operation, the user simply grasps and pulls on the tail 14 to unwind a length of the towel material from the roll. As described in the specification, this pulling action meets with little resistance from the feed mechanism and the user is able to withdraw a metered length of the material in the form of a towel sheet.

The electro-mechanical feed mechanism comprises a second electrical operational state that is not triggered until after the sheet has been severed by the user.

At this point, the electrical operational mechanism automatically drives the feed mechanism with the motor to dispense a measured length of the towel material from the slot in the form of a tail 14 for the next subsequent user. In summary, a user manually grasps and pulls a measured length of the towel material from the dispenser. After the user causes the measured length of towel to be severed, the electrical operational mechanism is then triggered to automatically dispense an additional amount of the material to define the tail for the next subsequent user.

Similarly, independent claim 20 calls for an electro-mechanical feed mechanism to have a first mechanical operational state wherein the towel sheets are dispensed by a user grasping and pulling on a tail of the towel sheet extending from the dispensing slot. The feed mechanism includes a second electrical operational state wherein a measured length of the towel material is electrically and automatically fed out of the dispensing slot to define the tail of the next sheet of towel material. The feed mechanism includes a feed roller driven in the second operational state and freely rotatable in the first operational state. A pressure roller opposes the feed roller such that the towel material passes between the feed roller and the pressure roller.

Applicant respectfully submits that the dispenser of Rooklyn '087 is fundamentally different from the invention set forth in claims 1 and 20. The Rooklyn '087 dispenser is a dual position dispenser that utilizes a single electric drive motor and gear train mechanism to drive either of the power driven rolls of each of the dispensing positions. A manual control handle is provided at each of the dispensing assemblies to initiate the automatic dispensing operation. As described throughout the '087 reference, the manual handles simply control the opening of the dispensing doors at each of the

positions which in turn results in energization of the drive motor and respective drive roller. Each of the dispensing positions also includes an adjustable key member which can be positioned for manual operation of a respective dispensing assembly. Thus, each of the assemblies of the Rooklyn '087 dispenser can be operated in either an automatic mode wherein the sheet is fully and automatically dispensed, or a manual mode wherein the sheet is fully manually dispensed. However, in no embodiment, is there an electro-mechanical feed mechanism in accordance with the present invention wherein only a tail section is automatically dispensed in an automatic electric mode, and wherein the remaining portion of the sheet is dispensed in a purely manual mode by a user grasping and pulling on the tail. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 20 patentably distinguish over Rooklyn '087 and are allowable.

Upon consideration of the present remarks, applicant submits that claim 1 and claims 2, 3, 13, and 16 depending therefrom are allowable. Likewise, claim 20 is also allowable. The remaining claims of record have been indicated as allowable.

With the present Amendment, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

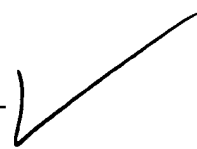
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